

BRICUP Newsletter 48

BRICUP

British Committee for the
Universities of Palestine

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The Second Annual EPACBI Conference

BRICUP members, in conjunction with its French colleagues in AURDIP (Association des Universitaires pour le Respect du Droit International en Palestine), hosted a meeting of the European Platform for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (EPACBI) at Conway Hall in London on November 26 – 27, 2011. Delegates from six countries – Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, France and Britain – attended; the Spanish

delegation was unfortunately delayed. EPACBI was formed just over a year earlier at a meeting in Paris, so this was an opportunity to take stock and consider ways of taking the campaign forward.

The situation in which our Continental colleagues find themselves varies considerably. In Norway, it seems, campaigners for an academic and cultural boycott have been able to carry out their activities with relatively little difficulty. But the more general experience is of unrelieved hostility from public authorities and university administrators, cold indifference from the popular media, and constant efforts by Zionist agents to obstruct their right to engage in peaceful protest. Thus the meeting heard of attempts by the Dutch Simon Wiesenthal Centre to smear the International Institute for Social Studies (ISS) and its host institution Erasmus University in relation to events during Anti-Apartheid Week. In Sweden the Action Group for the Boycott of Israel at the Royal Institute of Technology (KTH) faced opposition from the Institute's director when it sought to hold a meeting on campus. And in Paris AURDIP members at the Ecole Normale Supérieure (ENS) were twice refused permission to host meetings to hear Stéphane Hessel and later Omar Barghouti.

Stéphane Hessel, as readers of this newsletter will know, is a remarkable man: now 94 years old, he was a *résistant* of the first hour, a Holocaust survivor, diplomat, co-author of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, *grand officier de la Légion d'Honneur*, best-selling author of *Indignez-vous* and an alumnus of the ENS. Yet, because he intended to speak on justice for Palestine, the director of the ENS, Monique Canto-Sperber, refused to allow the meeting to proceed and subsequently stopped Omar Barghouti from

speaking at the ENS as well. These were remarkable interventions, not least because the ENS proudly claims on its own website to be ‘the most prestigious site of French intellectual and scientific life [and to have] participated in all the great intellectual debates of modern France, from the Dreyfus Affair to the movements of the 1930's, and from the foundation of the human sciences to the avant-garde movements of the 1970's.’ Evidently the ENS’s reputation ends where justice for Palestine begins.

But as activists have found elsewhere, such arbitrary, illiberal action seldom has the intended consequences. Within days of slamming the ENS’s door on Hessel, the director received a protest (which BRICUP helped to prepare) signed by several hundred prominent academics from across the English-speaking world. Meanwhile students, faculty and members of the public held a large demonstration outside the Panthéon, addressed by prominent civil rights campaigners. And the French media, normally reluctant to broach the subject of boycott, had no choice but to discuss the protests against Hessel’s ENS lock-out.

Despite the obstacles placed in their way, EPACBI activists have made progress on several fronts. One is opposition to Israeli participation in EU-funded research. BRICUP and AURDIP last summer formed a joint delegation to Brussels to highlight our objections to this misuse of research funds in meetings with Commission officials. Several targeted campaigns were also begun to publicize research collaboration involving European universities with Israeli universities, settlement-based firms and even arms manufacturers. A second front is the cultural boycott of Israel, in which EPACBI member groups are increasingly involved. Here progress has become strikingly evident. Two years efforts to discourage musicians and other artists from performing in Israel were infrequent and rarely successful. Since then the change has been dramatic: by now scarcely a week passes without news of another artist choosing to stay away. This appears to be as true of popular artists as it is of classical performers, film producers, novelists and poets, and encourages hope of growing support for our campaign among younger generations.

These two issues will remain at the centre of EPACBI’s activity in the coming year. Just as EPACBI’s national groups share a common interest in halting the misuse of EU research funding to legitimize and prop up colonialist Israel, so too they see this issue as one that will interest students wherever their own universities are implicated and involve them in the boycott campaign. Similarly

EPACBI intends to build on the success of the cultural boycott, not least by coordinating their initiatives more closely and using the new social media more effectively.

EPACBI’s member groups, albeit somewhat unevenly, have sustained the academic and cultural boycott over the past year. They have resolved to strengthen their role by, among other things, reaching out to the liberal professions and activating groups in European countries not yet involved in EPACBI. From all the evidence, European public opinion on justice for Palestine is way ahead of official opinion or traditional media outlets. With their enthusiasm renewed from the recent meeting and interim targets agreed, members are confident that EPACBI will make substantial progress in the year ahead.

Robert Boyce

The PACBI Column

2012: A Year to Further Intensify Academic Boycott

2011 was a year of hope and revolution. At the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI), we began the year with a message of solidarity with the people behind the revolutions in the region. By mid-year, the Palestinian Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) National Committee (BNC) expressed a similar sentiment of solidarity with movements around the world that seized on this revolutionary moment. [1]

As 2012 begins, we wish to reaffirm our strong support for and solidarity with the progressive revolutionary voices of the world valiantly putting their life at risk for our collective freedom, justice and dignity, especially in the face of counterrevolutionary forces, often from within.

Looking ahead to 2012, we must first look back at the academic and cultural boycott accomplishments of the BDS movement during the past year. We had set ourselves a goal to more rigorously pursue and implement academic boycotts, and the year did not disappoint!

BDS activists began the year strong with the University of Johannesburg’s historic decision to cut its institutional ties with Ben Gurion University [2]. In our response to this decision we expressed our support and affirmed a triumph for the logic of academic boycott against Israel’s complicit academy, as consistently reflected in the positions of

the Palestinian Federation of Unions of University Professors and Employees (PFUPE) as well as PACBI and its partners worldwide, including in South Africa. It is, indeed, a significant step in the direction of holding Israeli institutions accountable for their collusion in maintaining the state's occupation, colonization and apartheid regime against the Palestinian people. [3]

Late in the year, BNC members PACBI, PFUPE, Stop the Wall, and the Palestinian Students' Campaign for the Academic Boycott of Israel (PSCABI), launched a new campaign against the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7), which is "a multi-billion euro European Union research funding scheme that provides funds for universities and companies from different countries to work together on specific research projects." [4] Our partners in Europe, the European Platform for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (EPACBI), are also gearing up to work on this strategic campaign. FP7 was identified as a prime target because the program allows Israeli military companies and complicit academic institutions to participate on an equal footing with other EU member states. This campaign identifies a clear, egregious target in order to mobilize academics and institutions in Europe to do their part in ending Israel's violations of international law and Palestinian human rights.

In addition to this campaign and the victory in South Africa, student movements in Europe and the United States continue to expand and become more vocal and active on college campuses. In September, Students for Justice in Palestine organized a national conference in which they reasserted their support for BDS as a key tactic on college campuses in the US. We regularly communicate with new groups around the world wanting to start their own campus initiatives. The new year will begin on a positive note with a US national BDS conference at the University of Pennsylvania, and PACBI promises to appeal to more academics to put pressure on institutional links between their universities or academic organizations and Israel. We look to our partners to identify such links, as was the case in a recent appeal to the International Society for Justice Research to locate its conference outside Israel [5].

On the cultural scene, Alice Walker, Mike Leigh, Iain Banks, Meg Ryan, Henning Mankell, the Pixies, Elvis Costello, the late Gil Scott Heron, Carlos Santana, Faithless, and Massive Attack are among the many who have continued to stay away from apartheid Israel. In 2011, among the notable additions to this list were Vanessa Paradis and Johnny Depp, MF Doom, Jello Biafra, and most

recently Joker. Pink Floyd founder Roger Waters's public endorsement of cultural boycott and BDS in general [6] was a significant addition to actual supporters of the boycott, as opposed to cancelations, and was welcomed by BDS activists around the world.

The year was not all without challenges. In an ironic twist, the Israeli government proved the effectiveness of the BDS movement by passing an anti-BDS law in July of last year that effectively criminalizes any call for the boycott of Israel made by Israelis. While the BDS movement promises to overcome any legal battles waged against it, this law restricts the freedom of speech and movement of Israeli BDS activists.

Moreover, we faced those who did not heed our appeal for freedom, justice and equality, and tried to circumvent the call for boycott under various guises, such as "not understanding the conflict" or viewing art as "above politics," while simultaneously allowing their art to be used politically to whitewash Israeli violations of international law and human rights. We responded to these artists and cultural workers with the hope that they will listen to our moral reasoning in the future [7]. We also struggled with those who do not understand the nefarious impacts of normalization and the way it operates, and continued to appeal to them by explaining the nuances of occupation, colonialism and apartheid, and the mechanisms by which these oppressions control us [8].

At PACBI, we continue, with our international partners in Europe, South Africa, South Asia, the US, Canada, Australia and Latin America, to push the movement forward despite all obstacles. We continue to educate on the values of resistance with every campaign we launch and appeal we write, whether they go answered or not. The struggle for self-determination is a slow and steady process that demands patience, commitment, and sustained and ethical resistance. We believe that BDS offers people around the world the tools to join or effectively stand in solidarity with this resistance.

With this in mind, and looking forward to 2012, we call on activists to intensify all aspects of BDS, but to especially focus, whenever possible, on academic boycott. Specifically, we call on faculty and student activists to pressure their academic organizations to end collaboration with complicit Israeli academic institutions or organizations, and not to organize or participate in conferences in Israel. Furthermore, we appeal to academics not to publish in Israeli academic journals and to withdraw from editorial boards of international journals based at Israeli

universities. We also urge academics and students to oppose study-abroad programs that place students from the US and Europe at Israeli universities. The ongoing campaign by California State University (CSU) faculty and students against the renewal of the CSU-Israel study abroad scheme is an inspiration [9].

In short, we call on BDS activists around the world to mobilize over the implementation of the academic boycott guidelines [10], and for those in Europe to rally against Israeli collaboration under FP7. As Archbishop Desmond Tutu wrote in support of the University of Johannesburg's boycott of Ben Gurion University:

Israeli Universities are an intimate part of the Israeli regime, by active choice. While Palestinians are not able to access universities and schools, Israeli universities produce the research, technology, arguments and leaders for maintaining the occupation. [11]

It is time to take a stand to end all forms of complicity with Israeli academic and cultural institutions; they are key partners in the Israeli regime of occupation, colonialism and apartheid.

PACBI

Notes

[1] <http://www.bdsmovement.net/2011/occupy-wall-street-not-palestine-8163#.TvoARZhj7dk>

[2] <http://www.pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=1526>

[3] Ibid

[4] <http://www.pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=1736>

[5] <http://www.pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=1778>

[6]

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2011/mar/11/cultural-boycott-west-bank-wall>

[7] <http://www.pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=1582>

[8] <http://www.pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=1749>

[9] For more about the CSU campaign, and to endorse an open letter, see: <http://www.csun.edu/~vcnth00m/studyabroad.html>

[10] <http://www.pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=1108>

[11]

<http://www.timeslive.co.za/world/article675369.ece/Israeli-ties--a-chance-to-do-the-right-thing>

Norman Finkelstein catches the BDS bus

Once again, it seems, we have university authorities to thank for obstructing arrangements for a meeting on BDS, although the meeting, involving the prominent American campaigner Norman Finkelstein and Professor Jonathan Rosenhead, chair of BRICUP, proved to be enormously interesting. Students at University College London (UCL)

invited Professor Finkelstein to speak at the College on 11 November, during his UK tour organised by Jews for Boycotting Israeli Goods (J-Big) and the Palestine Return Group (PRC). But having done so, the university authorities pressured the students – allegedly for security reasons – to withhold information about the precise venue of the meeting until practically the last minute. This of course made it extremely difficult to produce suitable publicity, with the result that the meeting was rather poorly attended. (That same evening, despite an entry charge, the main hall at Friends House was packed when Professor Finkelstein spoke.) It also encouraged Professor Finkelstein to challenge Jonathan Rosenhead's argument for concentrating our energies on Boycotting, Divestment and Sanctions against Israel, by suggesting that such a strategy appealed only to a hard core of dedicated radicals, as indicated by the half-empty lecture hall in which they spoke.

The thrust of Professor Finkelstein's argument, which he reiterated at Friends House, has remained unchanged for several years. As he sees it, Israel acquired such a huge fund of good will after the scale of the Holocaust became common knowledge that it has remained much more difficult to challenge than, say, South Africa, Rhodesia, Sri Lanka, Burma or other serial human rights offenders. In fact, he holds that comparing Israel with South Africa, by claiming that they are equally guilty of Apartheid practices, and calling for the same sort of BDS campaign merely raises suspicions about the campaigners rather than persuading the non-committed to support action against Israel. Therefore, if we are to get beyond the 'hard core of dedicated radicals' and build a broad popular movement for change in the Middle East, we must base our campaign on something different. Here he calls for a single-minded focus upon international law.

The value of emphasising international law, for Professor Finkelstein, is fourfold. In the first place, the case against Israel has already been well established. The United Nations has adopted resolutions declaring the settlements in the Occupied Territories to be illegal and affirming the right of Palestinian refugees to return. The International Court of Justice at the Hague unanimously ruled that the Partition Wall is illegal. Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and other reputable human rights organisations have repeatedly reported on Israel's breaches of human rights. Second, the illegality of Israel's actions has been acknowledged almost everywhere at the official level, since practically every member of the United Nations,

excepting only the United States, Israel and for reasons that remain unclear several tiny tropical states in the Western Pacific, has voted consistently in support of motions condemning Israel in the General Assembly. Third, calling for Israel to respect international law is uncontroversial and much easier to gain support for than more 'political' demands. Fourth, Jews everywhere, for cultural and religious reasons, are especially susceptible to arguments based on respect for the law. Zionists made much of the Balfour Declaration of 1917 and the UN Partition resolution of 1947; indeed they never miss the chance to exploit legal concessions in their own colonialist activity and have constantly emphasised them in their campaigns. Jews are therefore exceptionally vulnerable to arguments based on law, and especially when it can be pointed out that, for example, the ruling on the Partition Wall was approved by all fifteen of the International Court justices, two of whom (the British and Irish nominees) were Jewish. Not least for this reason, therefore, opponents of Zionism should also place international law at the centre of their campaign, if they want to overcome Israel's remaining store of good will.

But, as Jonathan Rosenhead pointed out, the call for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions also drew upon strong historical traditions, and the association of Israel with South Africa served a valuable heuristic purpose by bringing home to many people the nature of the injustices suffered by Palestinians. The boycott campaign against Apartheid South Africa was still recent and its success an encouragement to those who supported justice in the Middle East. It provided a means for practical action, enabling individuals to demonstrate their opposition to Israel's oppression. Moreover, by all the evidence it was succeeding. The governments of the Western world remain in denial about Israel's actions, and the Zionists continue to lean on the BBC and other public institutions. But across Europe and further abroad public opinion was shifting decisively against Israel, not least because of the boycott movement.

Professor Finkelstein, who holds a doctorate in political science from Princeton University and was once heavily involved in radical politics, deliberately strips his arguments down to their basic elements. Similarly he strips his platform language of subordinate clauses and rhetorical flourishes in order to make his points more emphatically – which he does with his unmistakable Brooklyn accent. Not least for this reason, several members of the audience in the Q&A period that followed the two speakers' presentations indicated their

disappointment at Professor Finkelstein's minimalist approach to political action. Perhaps sensing the mood in the hall, he responded to a questioner by affirming that, contrary to what she and others might think, he supported Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions. This clearly did surprise others in the lecture hall, but it also came as something of a relief. And the meeting, chaired with inimitable efficiency by Naomi Wimborne-Idrissi of J-Big and BRICUP, ended with general agreement that important tactical issues had been well tested.

Reflections on Cultural Boycott

Discussion in the December 2011 edition of this newsletter revolved around whether the protests inside the Israel Philharmonic's Prom concert last September (co-organised by BRICUP and Jews for Boycotting Israeli Goods) 'curtailed freedom of expression', in Rachel Giora's formulation (though whether of the musicians themselves, or the audience listening to them, or both, wasn't entirely clear).

It's a discussion that's still going on elsewhere. For instance, an [article](#) about 'the politics of musical performance' on a site called Occupy 2012 links to a short film of musicians Lou Reed and Philip Glass declaring their support for Occupy Wall Street in December outside the Lincoln Centre in New York, where a new production of the Glass opera about Gandhi in South Africa, *Satyagraha*, had opened, and whose administration had called in the police to set barricades rather than allow OWS to occupy the space. What makes the film touching is partly the hopeful sentiments of the OWS activists, but also partly the beautiful music of Glass laid over black and white sequences of the OWS 'microphone' in action.

So is music 'sacred', as US composer [Janice Misurell-Mitchell](#) asks in a [thoughtful piece](#) about the Prom protests that the Occupy 2012 article also links to. Does its performance constitute a sort of 'sacred space', the disruption of which amounts to the violation of principle Rachel Giora is concerned about? While Misurell-Mitchell says that as a musician herself she wouldn't have been able 'in all conscience' to disrupt the performance, she nonetheless thinks that singing Beethoven's 'Ode to Joy' during the first piece of music was 'a brilliant concept examining ways we may take power through sound...It exerts its power through its "noise" and disruptions but the "noise" appears both as unwanted sound and the beloved Beethoven, so the disruption is more painful as a result and may

make some audience members angry. The protestors thus gain some power but provoke a reaction’.

Sound and space

Avi Shoshani, the secretary-general of the Israel Philharmonic, has [told the Jewish Chronicle](#) that his musicians were ‘abused and threatened’ during the Prom. But were they? The [Beethovians for Boycotting Israel](#) sang the ‘Ode to Joy’; subsequent groups shouted ‘Free Free Palestine’ at the moment conductor Zubin Mehta lifted his baton (but before the music began) and accepted to be escorted out. It was ‘ugly’, said Mr Shoshani: ‘I thought that it was one step away from a situation in which things would be thrown’. But things weren’t thrown, and there has been no evidence that the musicians were ‘abused and threatened’. In Misurell-Mitchell’s interesting formulation, the protestors ‘took power through sound’ – sounds the orchestra may not have wanted to hear, but sounds only. It’s worth looking up the [letter](#) Women in Black in Los Angeles sent to Avi Shoshani in October 2006, asking the IPO publicly to denounce the Occupation. This letter – the kind of ‘civilised’ protest Shoshani says he has no problem with – was endorsed by a huge and impressive list of organisations and individuals in the US and internationally – and the orchestra ignored it.

The IPO and all who sail in her

Will the IPO be back in London very soon? Not for four years at least, says Shoshani – not the UK nor Europe as a whole. But the IPO site carries a [promotional film](#) presented by Mehta that names some of the big international stars due to perform with the orchestra in Israel during 2011-12 – they include Christoph von Dohnanyi, Kurt Masur, Rafael Fruhbeck de Burgos, Murray Perahia, Thomas Hampson, Gustavo Dudamel and Riccardo Muti.

Will they have already received their letters from the Creative Community For Peace, a pro-Israel lobby recently [set up by](#) various popular music industry figures in the US and Israel? – letters that tell them, ‘Millions applaud the recent announcement of your upcoming tour of Israel. However over the next few weeks you will undoubtedly be hearing from other voices calling on you to cancel your trip in protest of actions in the West Bank and Gaza. Unfortunately, these misguided groups are trying to use the forums of music and culture to make incorrect and inflammatory political points’. Etc etc and so forth.

The National Theatre of Israel invited to London

One of these ‘misguided’ groups, the Israeli citizens’ organisation [Boycott!](#), has issued an open letter to

Shakespeare’s Globe in London, giving them information they may not have known when they invited the National Theatre of Israel, Habima, to perform in the international Shakespeare festival during May.

Here is Boycott from Within’s carefully-argued letter:

A Call to Shakespeare's Globe Theatre

Israel's Habima Theatre is due to present, in your forthcoming festival, "The Merchant of Venice". As noted on your website, this play includes the role of "Shylock, the most famous and controversial Jewish character in the theatre canon" – which naturally, presents particularly acute problems and dilemmas to an Israeli theatre.

As told to the Israeli media, the Habima Theatre did not sidestep the problems inherent to this particular element of the Shakespeare canon, but faced them and dealt with them in a socially engaged and committed manner. According to the designated director Ilan Ronen, Habima's presentation of "The Merchant of Venice" will emphasize the issue of xenophobia – persecution of the Jew in particular but also of hatred of ethnic and religious minorities in general. As such, it would have of direct relevance to audiences in contemporary Britain, as in all times and places.

It must be said, however, that Habima's praiseworthy outspoken position on this issue seems at variance with its stance on another issue which is highly controversial here in Israel – the creation and the expansion of settlements in occupied Palestinian territory – a policy which has recently impacted the sphere of Israeli Theatre in a very direct manner.

In the past year, two large settlements – Ariel in the northern part of the West Bank and Kiryat Arba in its south – set up "Halls of Culture" and asked theatres to come and present their plays there. Last year, a large group of Israeli theatre professionals – actors, stage directors, playwrights – declared they would not take part in such performances; among them were such well-known people as Joshua Sobol, Edna Mazia, Shmuel Hasfari and Anat Gov. For several weeks, this was a major issue on the Israeli public agenda, and the aforementioned Israeli theatre professionals have received much support from colleagues abroad, such as Stephen Sondheim, Mary Rodgers, Tony Kushner, Mandy Patinkin,

Theodore Bikel, Mira Nair, Julianne Moore, Vanessa Redgrave, Hal Prince, Roseanne Barr and other Broadway and Hollywood stars. (<http://jewishvoiceforpeace.org/blog/breaking-stephen-sondheim-julianne-m...>)

The dissident Israeli theatre professionals have argued that the West Bank settlements had been created in violation of International Law and with the specific aim of blocking any possibility of achieving peace with the Palestinians; that the expropriation of land in an occupied territory and the creation and maintenance of armed settlement enclaves are the very opposite of what is commonly termed "Culture"; and that therefore, a settlement maintaining a "Hall of Culture" was a blatant contradiction in terms.

It is especially noteworthy that Ariel and Kiryat Arba, like most settlements, are surrounded by walls and fences, closely guarded by soldiers and their own armed security personnel. A theatrical performance in a settlement is by definition a performance to an exclusively Israeli audience, with Palestinians living even in the nearest village being physically excluded from any chance of attending.

Despite all of the above, however, on this issue the management of Habima has taken a position which is remote from any kind of social engagement. Claiming to be "non-political", the management has reiterated its decision to perform in West Bank settlements, "like everywhere else". Moreover, the management specifically promised Limor Livnat, Minister of Culture in the Netanyahu Government, to "deal with any problems hindering such performances", i.e. to pressure recalcitrant actors into taking part in them, even against the dictates of their conscience. And it must be pointed out that for several months, Habima has indeed sent out its actors to hold theatrical performances in West Bank settlements, on a regular basis.

As Israeli citizens who are deeply concerned about the future of all people living in the region we deplore this attitude. We cannot help seeing the positions taken by Habima Theatre on the two issues – presentation of "The Merchant of Venice" in London and regular performances in West Bank settlements - as inherently incompatible. By inviting Habima to perform in London, you are siding with its administrators in the debate on settlement performances, and you are taking a step against the conscientious Israeli actors and playwrights who have refused to perform in the settlements.

We would be grateful to you for taking this issue up with your colleagues of Habima, ahead of its scheduled performance in London on May 28-29, 2012.

Sincerely,

Boycott! Supporting the Palestinian BDS Call from Within (Boycott from Within)

The Globe is asking other people to make their views known to them directly on info@shakespearesglobe.com; there is also a [Facebook page](#)

Kate McCarthy

Censorship of a Palestinian artist.

The Swiss Musée de l'Elysée has suspended the organisation of the Lacoste Elysée Prize 2011. Introduced in 2010 to support young photographers, the prize is worth €25,000.

Eight nominees were selected to take part in the contest for the 2011 prize. They were asked to produce three photographs on the theme *la joie de vivre*. With the help of an individual grant of €4,000, each nominee had carte blanche to interpret the theme in which ever way they favoured, in a direct or indirect manner, with authenticity or irony, based upon their existing or as an entirely new creation. An expert jury should be meeting at the end of January 2012 to select the winner of the 2011 Prize.

The Musée de l'Elysée based its decision to suspend arrangements for the prize when a private partner wished to exclude Larissa Sansour, one of the prize nominees. The Musée reaffirms its support of Larissa Sansour for the artistic quality of her work and her dedication. The Musée de l'Elysée had invited her to present the series of photographs "Nation Estate" in the framework of the contest.

For 25 years, the Musée de l'Elysée has strenuously defended artists, their work, the freedom of the arts and of speech. The press release concerning this decision reemphasises the Musée's commitment to these fundamental values.

Source: Press release by Sam Stourdzé, Director of the Musée de l'Elysée, Lausanne, 21 December 2011. (sam.stourdze@vd.ch),. See also <http://www.sakakini.org/visualarts/sansour.htm>

The NUS supports a BDS campaign.

A collaboration between King's College London (KCL) and an Israeli company located in an illegal West Bank settlement, funded by an EU grant, has been condemned by the National Executive Council (NEC) the National Union of Students (NUS).

At a recent meeting of the NEC a motion demanding the "immediate end" of KCL's research project with Ahava was passed with no opposing votes. The motion, noting the "overwhelming" international position on the illegality of Israeli settlements, states that "by collaborating with Ahava, King's itself has become complicit with violations of international law". As a result, the NEC resolved:-

- *To condemn the collaboration between King's College London and Ahava in the research project, and demand the immediate end of the university's involvement in the project, and the rejection of the financial grant King's has received for its participation.*
- *To strongly urge King's College London to re-evaluate its commitments to ethical research, and establish a formal ethical research policy, to prevent a similar situation from arising in the future that compromises the university's integrity and respect for international law.*
- *To support the campaign led by academics and students at King's in order to achieve the above aims.*

There have also been votes of support for the campaign from University of London (ULU) Senate and the KCL Student Union. As well as increasing the pressure on the KCL authorities, this NUS decision will be of particular interest to other student groups working on BDS campaigns on British campuses.

Source: [Ben White on Electronic Intifada](#)

Financial support for BRICUP

BRICUP needs your financial support.

Arranging meetings and lobbying activities are expensive. We need funds to support visiting speakers, book rooms for public meetings, print leaflets and pay the whole range of expenses that a busy campaign demands.

Please do consider making a donation .

One-off donations may be made by sending a cheque to the Treasurer, at BRICUP, BM BRICUP, London, WC1N 3XX, UK or

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BRICUP is the **British Committee for the Universities of Palestine**. We are always willing to help provide speakers for meetings. All such requests and any comments or suggestions concerning this Newsletter are welcome.

Email them to: newsletter@bricup.org.uk